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## A global history in a global world? Human rights in history education in the Global North and South

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**ABSTRACT:** In this study, we analyse similarities and differences in 957 students' perceptions of the history of human rights in six countries: England, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden and the United States of America. This is investigated through the lens of the intended, implemented and achieved curricula. Our aim is to better understand what historical events students perceive as central in the history of human rights in different countries and how this may relate to education *about*, *through* and *for* human rights across borders. While the findings indicate a global culture of human rights, we identify several challenges in the teaching and learning of universal human rights in history education. In some instances, notions of nationalism and exceptionalism in society and history culture pose great challenges to the teaching and learning of human rights. In others, a strong focus on the global world have complicated the identification of human rights issues in the local context. Our findings also highlight the neglect of certain historical narratives, most notably the history of indigenous and minority groups. These findings are significant to researchers, teachers and decision-makers interested in furthering human rights and international understanding through education.

**KEYWORDS:** Comparative education; global citizenship; human rights education (HRE); history education.

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## Introduction

In a globalizing world where people and ideas are constantly on the move, engaging with research on ideas related to Human Rights Education (HRE) in both the Global North and the Global South is becoming ever more important. The United Nations Human Rights charter after all intends to transcend the North-South divide. The centrality of human rights education for all has recently been re-affirmed through the UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 4.7, in which all learners by the year of 2030 should “acquire [the] knowledge and skills needed to promote” human rights, a culture of peace- and non-violence and an appreciation of cultural diversity (UN, 2015 p.17).

In principle, HRE is concerned with teaching students *about* human rights and helping them identify both their own rights and human rights around the world (Struthers, 2015, 2017; Tibbitts, 2002, 2016, 2017). This learning is widely believed to be best enabled *through* transformative, active educational designs, which have the potential to empower learners to critically engage with human rights issues and work *for* a just world. Scholars of history education argue that the study of history can be a central underpinning of democracy and cross-cultural understanding (see for example, Barton & Levstik, 2004). Historians also argue that the way we perceive the past is central to how we perceive the present and the future (Seixas, 2004), and can thus inform our actions. In light of human rights education theories, history may be *about* human rights but may also be connected to attitudes *for* human rights. Narratives from and about the past may spark action in the present and the future, but may also do the exact opposite by hindering action towards change (Osler, 2015). Noting how narratives of the past may connect people, it is relevant to better understand how the history of human rights may promote global international understanding across borders but also leave communities disconnected (Åström Elmersjö, Clark & Vinterek, 2017). Bearing in mind that history education is often underlined in international guidelines as a central part of supporting international understanding (Nygren, 2016a), it is important to grasp what history students may perceive as being associated with human rights in different parts of the world. Previous research has also noted that learning history is far more complex than reading and memorizing what is in the textbook (Levstik & Barton, 2018). Therefore, we find that asking students to reflect upon the past will add important dimensions beyond textbooks and guidelines. What students take away from schooling is central but also very diverse, making it important to map out and better understand the human rights perspectives in the historical consciousness of future citizens.

In this paper, we analyse similarities and differences in students’ perceptions of the history of human rights in six selected countries, namely England, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden and the United States of America (USA). Our aim is to better understand what historical events or movements students perceive as being central in a history of human rights in different countries and how this may relate to history education *about* and *for* human rights across borders.

## Previous research

In relation to the teaching and learning of history, previous human rights education research has centred around issues of teaching for change, giving students agency to work for a better world and to give practitioners’ and prospective teachers tools to teach human rights (Lücke, Tibbitts, Engel, Fenner, 2016; Tibbitts & Weldon, 2017). Theories of history education regard the notion of historical consciousness and a practical view of the past, which sees the present world as providing meaning to the past and vice versa (Jeismann, 1979; Rüsen, 1997; White, 2014), as key to the process of adapting a *change approach* (Lücke, 2016). In addition, a history

education emphasizing multiperspectivity has been viewed as crucial in fostering international understanding and active participation in human rights matters among adolescents (Lücke, 2016).

Human rights education research has identified different learning dimensions of human rights, which embodies said *change approach* (Løkke Rasmussen, 2013). One dimension includes that students should learn *about* human rights, related institutions and their development, as well as principles, norms and standards in order to obtain an understanding for the transfer of knowledge about human rights and systems upholding human rights. Another dimension includes learning *through* transformative pedagogies supporting and enhancing solidarity, empathy and respect for human rights values (Løkke Rasmussen, 2013; Lücke et al., 2016; Nygren & Johnsrud, 2018). Yet another dimension includes teaching and learning *for* human rights, whose aim is to empower students to assert their own and others' human rights as well as to critically engage with human rights issues and work *for* a just world. Thus, a history education that promotes human rights is one that strives towards nurturing a set of required knowledge, attitudes and skills for their promotion (Lücke et al., 2016; Løkke Rasmussen 2013; UNESCO, 2006). In history education, studies have shown that it is possible for students to both be critical and caring (Brooks 2011; 2014; Endacott, 2010; Kohlmeier, 2006; Nølgård & Nygren, 2019; Nygren, 2016b.). This fact alone indicates that history may serve as a productive training ground for moral response, change and human rights action. While previous studies of HRE have focused on *how* good practices can be achieved, few studies have shown an interest for the classroom practice itself (OSCE, 2009). *Which* historical events and movements have students learnt about in regard to human rights remains a lacuna in human rights education research.

Furthermore, previous research has noted how international guidelines may have both a direct and indirect impact on educational policies on a national level (Irye, 2002; McNeely, 1995; Meyer et al 1997; Nygren, 2016a). A recent report, funded by UNESCO (Mc Evoy, 2017), found that aspects of human rights were evident in educational policies in 88% of the member states. Addressing human rights and fundamental freedoms was also mandatory in teacher education in 61% of the states. This, however, does not mean that students necessarily learn what is intended in policies and related recommendations. This is underscored in a recent cross-national interview study investigating adolescents understanding of the causes of human rights violations, means for protecting rights and their own role in furthering human rights for themselves and others (Barton, 2019). While the study showed that the students were able to recognize the role of both individuals and institutions to a certain degree in the task of ensuring human rights, their perceptions of the ideas influencing human rights centred on personal and local contexts rather than societal mechanisms (Barton, 2019). By delving deeper into what students perceive as important past and present events of human rights in different national and cultural contexts, this study alludes to extend this existing body of research by contributing with important knowledge on how history education can be means for furthering human rights. In addition, scholars have called for empirical comparative studies of human rights education but have found the challenges daunting (Davies et al., 2005). Thus, this article serves as an empirical contribution to the field of human rights and history education research. This is done by posing and discussing the following questions:

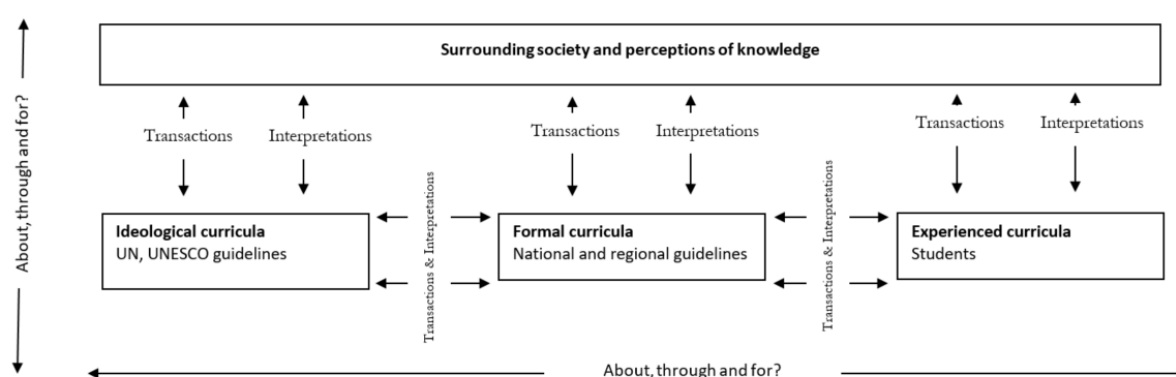
- What constitutes 'the global' in students' understanding of the global history<sup>1</sup> of human rights?
- Which historical events or movements do students perceive as being central in the history of human rights after nine years of schooling? How do their perceptions relate to formal curricula?

- How can students' perceptions of the history of human rights relate to human rights education about and for human rights across borders?

## Theoretical framework

Studies have shown that recommendations and guidelines are interpreted, transferred and neglected on all levels of the educational system (Goodlad, 1979; Nygren, 2011). Policy-makers design curricula to fit ideological and cultural interests on both national and regional levels (Apple, 1992; Ball et al., 2012). In schools, teachers read, interpret and transform intended curricula into educational designs in various ways and students, coming into the classroom with a diversity of backgrounds, learn contents, skills and attitudes in a number of ways (Nygren, 2016a, 2016b). On all levels, there are a number of dilemmas regarding which contents, methods and mindsets to prioritize. Questions regarding *what*, *how* and *why* human rights can and should be taught in schools can be answered in multiple ways – opening up for some educational opportunities while hindering others.

With inspiration from Goodlad's (1979) curriculum theory, and Ball et al.'s (2012) notion of policy enactment, we will treat the implementation of human rights in history education as a process including direct transactions of ideas and interpretations in a complex interplay with the world at large. Each curricular level can contain several different perspectives. In addition, previous research has highlighted how implementing international guidelines is complex and not an automatic top-down process (Nygren, 2011, 2016a). What is formulated in recommendations and national guidelines does not automatically seep down into classroom practice and to the students.



**Figure 1.** Theoretical and analytical model of the relationship between and within curricular realities on different levels.

Figure 1 illustrates the analytical and theoretical framework of this study: different curricular levels with different means and goals, and possible interpretations and transactions between them. The illustration shows the different curricular domains included in this study, which are further reflected in the research design. It demonstrates the great importance of interpretations for how guidelines are constructed, understood, neglected and passed on in domains with didactical considerations regarding *what*, *why* and *how* students should learn about human rights events in school. This point of departure acknowledges an interplay between the levels and opens up for critical analysis of content, ideas and values in line with previous notions of curricula as a matter of discourse within societal context (Apple, 1992). By comparing formulations in curricula, we can identify what is emphasized and ignored in the arena of formulations (Lindesjö & Lundgren, 2000); at the same time, studying and mapping students' perceptions of human rights in different educational settings – or arenas of realizations – will

help us better understand the complex reality of teaching and learning human rights within history education.

In this study, the intended ideological curricula for human rights is presented through UN and UNESCO guidelines, i.e. what in research often is described as “an international human rights regime” (see for example, Donnelley, 1986). Rather than being perceived as an actual international curriculum to be implemented top-down, this *ideological curricula* should be regarded as a set of recommendations on how education should promote universal human rights values across the globe. The *formal curricula* is in this study, comprised of descriptions of the each country’s history syllabi in relations to notions of human rights. These curricular levels or dimensions, which altogether may be viewed as an *intended curricula*, are then put in light of what students perceive as being central regarding historical events of human rights in the past and present – the *experiential (experienced) curricula*. In line with Goodlad’s (1979) theories, we do not see the guidelines as more important than students’ experiences. Rather the opposite: the centre of this article, and the basis for our analysis, is *what* students actually find most important regarding human rights and how this relates to other levels of curricula as well as students in other countries. Thus, this paper will not offer the reader an in-depth policy analysis or set out to define a much-needed episteme of Human rights education (see Parker, 2019). Beyond the scope of the present investigation is also the implemented curriculum, such as the educational practices within school and the history classroom. Through investigating *what* students perceive as central in regards to events of human rights in history, our intention is to contribute with a body of knowledge to better understand the complex question of *how* history education and the HRE-approach can be means to accomplish a global awareness among adolescents in the Global North and South. Our hope is that these findings may be used as a springboard and guide for researchers, teachers and decision-makers interested in furthering human rights and international understanding in history education within and beyond the national contexts researched as part of this paper.

## Data and methodology

As a part of a survey mapping global citizenship education in the Global North and South,<sup>2</sup> we asked students in six countries to answer the open-ended and qualitative question: *What are some historical events or movements that you consider to be linked to the history of human rights?* This question was designed to provide us with varied student perspectives on the history of human rights and make it possible for us to make comparisons. The open-ended responses derive from a dataset of answers from England (n = 215), India (n = 159), New Zealand (n = 220), South Africa (n = 190), Sweden (n = 230) and the USA (n = 153). The questionnaire was completed by 1072 students and 957 answered the question regarding the history of human rights. The majority of respondents were female (ca. 55%). Students ranged between year 9 and 13, age 16-19, and belonged to a variety of groups (social, cultural) within multicultural school contexts. This is also evident in the fact that many of the students would speak an additional language at home, other than what they would use in school. This was particularly the case in India and South Africa, where 96% and 71% of the respondents respectively spoke a different language than the language of instruction. In the USA this was 37%, in England 21%, in Sweden 31%, and in New Zealand 16%.<sup>3</sup> All surveyed students had attended school for at least nine years.

The selection of countries was based upon the purpose to study human rights and global citizenship education as global challenges. An international team of scholars of human rights education and history education conducted data collection in countries in the Global North and South and the questionnaires were administered through non-random, convenience sampling. Students commented on whether or not they had learned human rights, peace and sustainable

development in their school, the methodologies used by the teachers, how they saw these concepts represented in their learning, and *how* what they learned in school affected their thinking about these topics. Students completed the questionnaires using *Survey Monkey*. The data were then downloaded into Excel spreadsheets and codes were then developed for open-ended responses. Based upon previous research and theories regarding the implementation of history of human rights in education, we developed codes in an iterative process where we paid close attention to the responses in order to make sure we captured the richness of perspectives. A multi-step, iterative process was carried out to finalize the set of codes used for the history question, with distinctions made between spatial dimensions (for example, domestic, non-domestic, cross-national) as well as event typologies (for example, genocides and mass violence, crimes against humanity, armed conflict, social movements, key legislation or court decisions). In each country, national researchers coded the open-ended responses adding codes for all the collected comments to ensure the inclusion of the rich variety of students' perceptions of the past. Drawing from a mixed-methods approach, we combined qualitative readings of students' responses with quantitative comparisons of codes, both within and between countries (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Percentages are in this study merely used as means to highlight prominent tendencies among the student answers, wherefore we will not make any quantitative claims in this study.

Admittedly, this small sample holds limitations and our conclusions are not generalizable. The analytical entities that we compare in this study are in many ways non-equal. Some countries more than others have distant or near histories of civil war, colonialism, slavery, apartheid and relatively complex present situations with different political tensions. Bearing this in mind, we still find that the diversity of cultural contexts can provide us with important perspectives beyond national and cultural borders. Shedding light upon the experienced curriculum in conjunction with the intended ditto may help us understand some of the challenges of implementing ideals of human rights through history education.

## **The ideological and formal curricula – the (inter)national guidelines**

Below, the ideological and formal curricula is described. Firstly, the ideological curricula is framed as international recommendations on how to teach about, through and for human rights. Secondly, the section formal curricula provides the reader with information of each national context and their history syllabi with an emphasis on how history as a school subject underscores human rights values.

### ***Ideological curricula***

We treat the United Nations (UN) and UNESCO guidelines for human rights education as ideological curricula having the political intention to promote education *about, through* and *for* human rights. The UN (2011, p. 3) states that:

Human rights education and training encompasses education: (a) About human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection; (b) Through human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners; (c) For human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others.

In the ideological curricula we also find that cultural diversity is closely linked to human rights. UNESCO (2001, p. 63) states that:

The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, UNESCO (1984, p.28) emphasizes that there “is a co-ordinated system of social, political and cultural rights, which has been incorporated in a number of United Nations resolutions, documents and conventions”, which all are to be implemented in an education *about, through and for* human rights. These are as follows:

1948 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 1948 The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. 1952 The Convention on the Political Rights of Women. 1966 The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. 1966 The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 1966 The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. 1973 The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (UNESCO, 1984, p. 28).

### ***Formal curricula – the national and local guidelines***

#### *England*

The history curriculum in England has been open to debate ever since the introduction of a state educational system towards the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Cannadine, Keating and Seldon, 2011; Chapman, Burn and Kitson, 2018). Much of the focus of the history in recent years has been less on international understanding and more on the reinforcement of national identity as a response to perceived threats of fragmentation and division in society (Chapman et al., 2018; Osler, 2009; Welply, 2018). Whilst earlier curriculum versions insisted on engaging with “the diversity and complexity of human experience” (DES, 1991; DfEE/QCA, 1999) there was a marked turn from 2008 towards the reinforcement of a national framework for thinking about “*our* ethnic and cultural diversity” (QCA, 2007 p.111). The 2014 version of the national history curriculum removed all mention of transferable skills from history towards citizenship and continued the trend towards the reinforcement of English history and strengthening national identity (Chapman et al., 2018; DfE, 2013). This resonates with the declaration of former Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, in 2010 that a history curriculum should ensure that “all students will learn our island story” (Gove, 2010). The compulsory history education in primary and secondary schools in England (which becomes optional as a GCSE subject from Year 10, the fourth year of secondary education in England) does not make any explicit reference to human rights or citizenship. In terms of content, the history curriculum is divided into umbrella themes, with non-statutory suggestions. For the “contemporary history from 1901” section, the only statutory element is the Holocaust (DfE, 2013).

In the current 2014 curriculum, the emphasis remains on history as a tool for building national identity:

to know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people’s lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world (DfE, 2013 p.1).

Reference to a more international perspective remains limited, contained under the term “wider world” and mentions violation of human rights under the rather ambiguous term of “the follies of mankind”. The only emphasis on understanding diversity and students’ own identities is put in the overall “purpose of study”:

Teaching should equip students to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. History helps students to understand the



complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time (DfE, 2013 p.1).

### India

Drawing from the Indian constitution, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in use since 2005 (NCF, 2005) strongly emphasizes human rights as one of its underpinning principles. Accordingly, history education carries “a normative responsibility of creating a strong sense of human values, namely freedom, trust, mutual respect, and respect for diversity” and history education should therefore encourage a “critical moral and mental energy, making [students] alert to the social forces that threaten these values” (NCF, 2005, p. 51). The NCF provides broad guidelines and school curriculum. In India, textbooks based on the values enshrined in the constitution and national guidelines are used in order to safeguard values of universal human rights prescribed in international guidelines. While the nation and its values are held as important, “multiple ways of imagining the Indian nation” should be enabled through history education. In addition, “[t]he national perspective should be balanced with reference to the local”, thus encouraging teachers to seek for local historical events elevating the narratives conveyed in the textbooks. While teaching the local history, NCF stresses that “Indian History should not be taught in isolation, and there should be reference to developments in other parts of the world” (NCF, 2005, p. 51). In line with this notion, the history textbooks used in Indian schools have excerpts from various historical declarations on the rights of humans, such as Magna Carta, the Code of Hammurabi, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen from the French Constitution.

### New Zealand

New Zealand's national curriculum consists of two documents: *The New Zealand Curriculum* (for English medium schools) and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (for Maori medium schools). The two documents present a common vision of education that “will develop the competencies they need for study, work, and lifelong learning and go on to realise their potential,” while helping schools “give effect to the partnership that is at the core of our nation's founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi” (Ministry of Education, 2007, pp. 9-10).

There is no prescribed content or knowledge. Schools are required to design programmes in consultation with their broader communities that meet student needs. Those programmes are required to reflect and critically explore commonly held values, such as their own values and those of others; moral, social, cultural, aesthetic, and economic values; the values on which New Zealand's cultural and institutional traditions are based as well as the values of other groups and cultures with the aim of learning to value a range of ideals to “be expressed in everyday actions and interactions” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.10). Many of these values – diversity, equity, community participation, sustainability, integrity and respect for self and others – emphasize global citizenship and the importance of human rights.

History only occurs in the curriculum as a separate discipline at Year 11. Prior to this, historical contexts feature (to a degree determined by each school) in Social Studies, which is part of a “core” of subjects required from Year 1 to Year 10. More guidance for teacher-planners is provided by the History Curriculum Guide which establishes broad aims in line with ideological curricula. It encourages learning programmes that help students “to ask, and [...] answer, today's questions by engaging with the past and imagining and speculating on possible futures,” by presenting “the dilemmas, choices, and beliefs of people in the past”, to connect them with “the wider world as they develop their own identities and sense of place” by engaging “with history at personal, local, and international levels.” (Ministry of Education, 2017).

### *South Africa*

The South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in use since 2011 (Department of Basic Education, 2011) strongly emphasizes human rights as one of its underpinning principles by referring to the South African constitution. The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 (General) (upper secondary level) is “sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors” (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 4). This is directly linked to the liberal rights orientated South African Constitution. It is also clearly stated that the study of history at school level should be “promoting human rights and peace by challenging prejudices involving race, class, gender, ethnicity and xenophobia” (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 6). In terms of content related to human rights, specific emphasis is placed on it in Grade 12, notably when addressing the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The curriculum critically presents the TRC as a contested mechanism and process of dealing with historical injustice, whereby the focus was on investigating “gross human rights [while] ignoring institutional violence” (Department of Basic Education, 2011 p. 30).<sup>4</sup>

Overall, the idea is for learners to “ground knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives”. The idea is also to “prepare young people for local, regional, national, continental and global responsibility” (Department of Basic Education, 2011 p. 6). Learners in South Africa are further expected to be able to understand “the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation” (Department of Basic Education, 2011, pp. 3-4). Accordingly, the content in CAPS is organised by means of a “comparative approach [which] shows the interconnectedness between local and world events – what happens in the rest of the world has an effect on what happens in South Africa and vice versa.” (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 8). This is related to the key question: “How do we understand our world today?”. As a consequence, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is studied alongside slavery in South Africa as it relates to the Indian Ocean Slave Trade (Grade 10); Constructions of race and eugenics are studied by comparing the USA, Australia, Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa (Grade 11); and Civil Rights Protests in the USA (1950s-1970s) are studied alongside Civil Society Protests in South Africa (1960s-1980s) (Grade 12). In the view of CAPS, “in teaching history it is important to demonstrate the current relevance of the events studied” (p.10). All of the above is linked by CAPS to thinking critically along historical lines about the past.<sup>5</sup>

### *Sweden*

Swedish curricula have developed much in line with international guidelines of international understanding and emphasized the importance of human rights and global history (Åström Elmersjö & Lindmark, 2010; Nygren, 2016b; Standish & Nygren, 2018). Today the national compulsory curriculum states that each student individually should be able to: “[...] determine their views based on knowledge of human rights and fundamental democratic values, as well as personal experiences” and “empathise with and understand the situation of other people, and develop a willingness to act with their best interests at heart” (Skolverket 2011a, p. 10). In secondary school history education, this strives to underscore that Swedish students are supposed to learn “critical thinking and independently formulate standpoints based on knowledge and ethical considerations,” and obtain knowledge “about the cultures, languages, religion and history of the national minorities (Jews, Romani, indigenous Samis, Swedish and Tornedal Finns)” (Skolverket 2011a, p.15). The upper secondary history syllabus stresses that students should develop an understanding of “their own identities, values and beliefs, and those of others” and learn “[h]ow history can be used to understand how the age in which people live affects their conditions and values”. Furthermore, it stresses how students should meet

“[h]istorical narratives from different parts of the world” and draw conclusions from them (Skolverket, 2011b, pp. 163-175). Lastly, the weight of fostering a historical consciousness among the students is being highlighted through the process of understanding “that the past affects our view of the present, and thus our perception of the future” (Skolverket, 2011b, pp. 163-175).

### *The United States of America*

There is no national curriculum in the United States. Reflecting a federalist form of organization, each of the 50 US states, and sometimes even school districts, have the freedom to establish their own curriculum. Many US states have voluntarily adopted ‘Common Core’ standards, including the state of Massachusetts, where the survey data was collected. The History Standards link ‘historical literacy’ and ‘historical thinking’ with learning goals for evaluating key ideas, looking for evidence and constructing a research-based narrative (UCLA, 2018b). Massachusetts has a History and Social Science Curriculum Framework (2003), which establishes Learning Standards, Concepts, and Skills from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the final year of schooling. At the secondary school level, the history curriculum includes two required courses in World History and two required courses in US history. A content review of the 2003 curriculum shows only one instance where human rights is explicitly referred to. The second World History course includes the following guidance:

WHII.29 Describe reasons for the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 and summarize the main ideas of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2003, p. 63).

The History and Social Science Curriculum Framework was revised by the Massachusetts Department of Education in 2018, following the administration of the survey. Notably, the new framework includes human rights numerous times: in guiding principles; in World History, U.S. History, and government electives. The term human rights is used in conjunction with both international politics and U.S. civil rights and civil liberties (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018). The students who participated in the study had taken history courses required by the Massachusetts Department of Education and an optional course in human rights called “Facing history”.

### **Data analysis – the experienced curricula**

Our cross-national analyses of the open-ended responses collected through our survey show some prominent themes – indicating similarities and differences in how students think about human rights in the past. Students’ responses to the question “What are some historical events or movements that you consider to be linked to the history of human rights?” indicate perspectives on the past foregrounding certain aspects of human rights in the past and present while neglecting others. These findings are presented below under three main themes: *knowing your rights*, *recognition of violence and oppression*, and *struggles for human rights*.

#### ***Knowing your rights***

*Human rights – a constitutional matter?*

Concerning citizenship and human rights, we found an interesting relation between the cross-sections of adolescents surveyed in this study. In India, human rights are closely linked to the *fundamental rights* as outlined in the Indian constitution (last revised in 1949, immediately after independence) and the *right to freedom* and *right to equality*, noted by 10% of the Indian students. Inevitably, the decolonization of India, which is noted by 7% of our Indian respondents, may be seen as key in the development of human rights for some of these adolescents.

In America, freeing of the slaves (noted by eight students) and the constitution (noted by four students) are the political decisions and legal documents brought to the fore. It is however surprising that more Swedish students than US students link the history of human rights to the US declaration of independence from 1776. Only one US student noted the Declaration of independence – an event noted by seven Swedish students. The stronger focus on legal documents and international human rights among Swedish students may be influenced by the fact that Sweden is a small country with a history of supporting the UN. 10% of the Swedish respondents linked the United Nations to human rights, while 12% tie human rights to the French revolution. Interestingly, the French revolution is also noted by four Indian and New Zealand students, and only one English student. Conversely, it remained unobserved by the US and South African students as an example of a human rights event. For South African students, the political decision to end apartheid was central to their thinking on the history of human rights; this local event showed to be more top-of-mind than international decisions and legal documents relating to human rights among the responses.

### ***Recognition of violence and oppression***

#### *Genocides and mass violence as human rights violations*

Genocides in general, and specific genocides and state-sanctioned mass violence in particular, were noted as violations of human rights by students in the Global North and South. The Holocaust stands out as the most frequently noted genocide. This is especially the case among the US and Swedish respondents, where 32% and 17% of the students respectively mentioned the Holocaust. In the Swedish case, it may be the outcome of the formal curricula and the active politics by the Ministry of Education, which has foregrounded the holocaust as an example of genocides in the History syllabus (Skolverket, 2011). In New Zealand, the holocaust was noted as a violation of human rights by fifteen students. The lack of Indian (3) and South African accounts (0) mentioning the Holocaust suggests that this may be perceived as a European, Western and American rather than a global matter. Contradictorily, only six English respondents mentioned the holocaust despite its statutory position in the history curriculum (DfE, 2014). This suggests a predominant framing of the holocaust in terms of a historical event rather than a human rights violation.

In addition to the Holocaust, US students identified a wide range of genocides as examples of human rights violations, most notably the genocides in Rwanda (18%) and Armenia (10%). While the latter was otherwise ignored by respondents in the other countries, only one New Zealand and two Swedish students mentioned Rwanda's genocide. With the exception of apartheid, South African, English and New Zealand students did not list any other crimes against humanity in the global south or north.<sup>6</sup> In line with this finding, the Indian students showed no accounts of non-national mass violence as human rights violations. They exclusively mentioned the Jallianwala Bagh massacre committed by English Indian troops who fired into a crowd of Indians during protests against the arrest of two national leaders in 1919.

Only a small number of US and Swedish students mentioned recent genocides and mass violence in other parts of the world, not connected to their own national history. They

mentioned violent events in DR Congo, the Balkans and Cambodia, as well as towards the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Maya in Guatemala and the Yazidi people in Iraq. Interestingly, references to the recent violence in Rwanda and Congo were absent in South African responses – a finding that points to the complex nature of human rights matters beyond the north-south divide.

### *Apartheid: a collective memory in the global south and north*

The system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination that known as apartheid was widely highlighted by adolescents in the Global North and South. 46% of the South African students, seven US students, five Indian students, three Swedes and one respondent from England identified apartheid as a violation of human rights. New Zealand stands out as the only country where apartheid was not mentioned in this respect. Noticeable is also a tendency among students from outside of South Africa towards associating the anti-apartheid movement and its front figure particularly, Nelson Mandela, to human rights.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to these generic mentions, the South African students showed a more detailed understanding of this history. They mentioned several historical events connected to the struggle for civil rights in South Africa, notably the women's march against passes in 1956, the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, the Soweto uprising in 1976, the Black consciousness movement and the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela. In addition, they not only mentioned Mandela, but also linked him to accounts of the country's transition from apartheid and the beginning of democratization. Previous research on the teaching and learning of genocides and mass violence in South Africa stated that:

[...] Many educators cannot divorce their own personal history [and experiences of apartheid] from that of the required curriculum and find it increasingly difficult to teach about this period" and instead turn to the Holocaust which offers a history less emotionally charged and "[...] removed from the local experience" (Nates, 2010, p. 9).

In contradiction to Nates' statement, a lack of references to the Holocaust suggests that the Holocaust may be viewed as a "non-event" by South African learners,<sup>8</sup> and that they instead foreground their own emotionally charged and contested violent past more than considering other genocides and events of mass violence.<sup>9</sup>

### *Colonization, decolonization, and the abolishment of slavery*

There are many examples of violations of human rights and different social movements and protests that are recognized as matters of human rights by the respondents in this study. Remarkably, only a handful of students – five in the USA, three in Sweden, three in New Zealand and three in India – identified colonization as a cross-national crime against humanity, while only four Indian students noted the ending of colonialism and decolonization processes as important human rights matters. In South Africa and England, we found no such references to colonization. An explanation for this silence in South Africa might be that the country, constitutively independent since 1910, suffered what in postcolonial theory has been described as internal colonization, a system whereby the white minority oppressed the black majority in numerous ways. It is noteworthy how decades of colonial exploitation are neglected and overlooked by the English students, pointing to their silencing of their country's history of oppression. In contrast to students from the former British Empire, their Indian counterparts especially stressed matters related to colonial rule and conflicts with Great Britain, often referring to Mahatma Gandhi and the Swadeshi movement. These contrasting findings point to colonialism as being primarily in the minds of students from countries previously colonized, in which human rights are also deeply linked to liberation from colonial rule.

Slavery is another phenomenon often acknowledged as a crime against humanity. Slavery was mentioned by 10% of US students as well as by ten Swedish, six English, five Indian, four New Zealanders, and two South African respondents. The anti-slavery movement was further acknowledged in all countries but South Africa, and was especially prominent in England, where fifteen students mentioned it. The abolishment of slavery, in contrast, was noted by eight US students, two South Africans and only one English student. This suggests that slavery may primarily be viewed as a domestic matter in the USA and that there are few or no ties between slavery and colonialism among the responses.

### *Human rights violations in wars and armed conflicts*

Many students' responses linked the history of human rights to wars and armed conflicts around the world. This is most noticeable in Sweden, where 31% of the students mentioned World War II, particularly, in relation to human rights. This conflict was otherwise only mentioned by 6% of the Americans and 2% of the Indian students and by none of the students in South Africa, New Zealand and England<sup>8</sup>. *In the Swedish case, this phenomenon may again be the result of the impact of the formal curriculum*; it may also be due to the historically disputed neutral stance Sweden held during the war. In the case of England and the USA, which participated and intervened more actively in the war, World War II may be seen as a domestic matter of conflict. This seems to find evidence in three US students' mentions of the Japanese internment in the US during World War II as a human rights violation.

The American Civil War is also mentioned by students in New Zealand (9%), USA (4%) and India (1%). In addition, some students in Sweden (14) and New Zealand (6) simply noted "wars" as being related to human rights violations.

Moreover, Indian students mentioned wars that have taken place in the more recent past and closer to their own nation: the war involving Tamil-speaking Indians in Sri Lanka (noted by three students), the Bangladesh liberation war (mentioned by one student) and the partition of India and Pakistan (mentioned by one student).

### *Struggles for human rights*

#### *A global history of women's rights and the birth of feminism*

Second only to slavery as a violation of human rights, the struggle for women's rights and equality serves as the most prominent common human rights related narrative told by our respondents in the Global North and south alike. The most noted event is the struggle for women's rights fought by the Suffragettes: it was noted by 31% of the students in New Zealand, 15% of students in the USA, 12% of the English, 3% of the Swedish and 1% of the Indian students. Conversely, South African students made no references to such historical human rights struggles in the Global North. The Swedish, English and American students further noted the actual court decisions that entitled women to vote (13, 5 and 1 student(s), respectively) – a fact that is overlooked by the New Zealand, Indian and South African students. Accounts of the feminist movement of the 1960s and the present day were found across all six countries: 10% of the US students, 6% of the Swedish students, 4% of the Indian and New Zealand students, 2% of the English students and 1% of the South African students stressed feminist movements as important social movements underpinning human rights. In relation to women's rights, six Indian students specifically mentioned Sati, or widow-burning, and the prohibition of sati practice as a noteworthy human rights matter, thus highlighting religious and patriarchal traditions and related violations.

While women's rights in the past and present were prominent in students' responses across borders, mentions of LGBT+ rights, same-sex marriage and sexual harassment were less

frequent. LGBTA-rights as a social movement related to human rights is most noted by the Swedish students (five students), followed by New Zealand and England (four students) and the US (three students). Same-sex court cases and marriage rights were only brought up in six questionnaires; one in the US, one in Sweden and four in New Zealand. Furthermore, two students – one in the US and one in Sweden – highlighted the *#metoo*-movement, where women demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment through sharing their personal experiences. Remarkably, only one of the 957 students in the GlobalNorth and South highlighted problems related to human and sexual trafficking. Thus, framing gender and sexual equality issues as topics of human rights remains a challenge for Human Rights education in the global arena.

*The history of Civil rights – a matter more complex than the south- and north divide*

A wide acknowledgement of civil rights events suggests that there is a crosscutting interest in civil rights among the students in the Global North and South. Among the majority of US students (62%), the history of the civil rights movement served an example of a human rights struggle. Constituting a series of important events in United States domestic history, the struggle for civil rights in North America is prominent within all countries' responses. Its leader, Martin Luther King (MLK), was mentioned by 62% of all US students, 39% from New Zealand and 23% from England, whereas 11% of the Swedish students, 5% of the South African students and 4% of the Indian students acknowledged MLK and his deeds. While the picture of civil rights painted by the US and English students is done so with broad strokes, the South African and New Zealand accounts are more detailed: for example, they respectively mentioned the Black power movement and the Montgomery Bus boycott.

In India, the nation's own struggles for civil rights and liberation was a focal point in the students' responses. The leader associated with the Indian civil rights struggles, Mahatma Gandhi, was the third most noted person after Martin Luther King and Mandela: 17% of the Indian students, 3% of the US students and 2% of the Swedish and English students ascribed Gandhi the role of a liberator for the Indian people. Conversely, Gandhi and the Indian liberation movement were absent from students' responses in New Zealand and South Africa. While absent in South African responses particularly, one Indian student addressed the racism towards Gandhi whilst living in South Africa, drawing connections between these two countries' histories of human rights. Overall, the Indian students noted several historical events and movements related to the liberation, namely the Jallianwala Bagh massacre (as mentioned earlier), the Swadeshi movement, the Satyagraha movement, the Non-cooperation Movement and the Quit India movement. Finally, yet importantly, the Indian students traced human rights, such as right to freedom and right to religion, back to their own constitution (as seen above). While Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela featured across responses from the six countries to various extents, Gandhi was only mentioned to a lesser degree, while no students outside of India noted any historical events connected to the history of human rights in India. Since the same cannot be said in regard to, for instance, American historical domestic struggles, this imbalance may be interpreted as a manifestation of the prevalence of western perspectives among the responses.

In India, struggles for human rights were much seen as a national matter, but also as a present one. Nine Indian students highlighted the predicament of untouchability and oppression experienced by the Dalits as a violation of human rights. This civil rights matter is also a matter that may be regarded as much reminiscent of the struggle for black civil rights in the 1960s. In addition, four Indian students underscored that the oppressiveness of the caste system, Varna, viewing this also as a violation of human rights and possibly, thus, as a system to be done away with to ensure to cast human rights for all citizens in India.

### *A neglected history of indigenous and minority groups in the Global North and South*

Students' responses pointed to a neglect of minority and indigenous perspectives on human rights in all six countries. Violations of indigenous peoples' rights were thus neglected by most students in the survey. In Sweden, only one student highlighted "the oppression towards indigenous people". In New Zealand, a handful of students considered the treatment of the Maori as a human rights violation; the Invasion of Parihaka, where 1600 men, volunteers and Armed Constabulary destroyed the village and dispersed its inhabitants in 1881, served as an example. In addition, two New Zealand students linked the Treaty of Waitangi (the peace treaty between the English Crown and Māori chiefs in 1840) to the development of human rights. The treatment of Native Americans, which some consider to have been a genocide (though still debated), was only raised by seven of the US students. One of them linked the oppression of Native Americans in the past to a current controversy around a planned Dakota oil pipeline.

### **Concluding discussion**

Across all six countries, we found that formal curricula in one way or another, underpin values of universal human rights. Such values can, as seen above, be described in relation to a national constitution and thus be perceived as national values, worded as something universally human or phrased in terms of democratic values. Despite this, the students' answers showed fundamental differences across the globe.

Differences regarding history and contemporary events in India, Sweden, New Zealand, USA, South Africa and England may partly explain the differences among the answers. We are, as stated in the introduction, comparing countries with distant or near histories of civil war, colonialism, slavery, apartheid and more or less complex present situations with different political tensions. The students' responses to the survey questions, while not providing true national samples, highlight several challenges of teaching and learning human rights in history education, and pose important questions in regards to human rights and the notion of a global history in a global world. What follows is a brief discussion of the responses country by country in relation to formal curricula.

Although the responses of the young people from the English section of the survey cannot be seen as fully representative of the whole youth in the United Kingdom, some elements of explanation can be put forward to contextualize their responses. First, the tendency towards a "nationalization" of the history curriculum in the past ten years can help explain the low rate of engagement with notions of colonialism, or the mention of any other human rights violation in the Global North or Global south beyond apartheid. The curriculum's re-focusing on English national history can similarly explain the relatively limited international perspective in students' responses. Furthermore, the absence of references to actual human right violations can be understood as resulting from the absence of explicit references to human rights in the 2014 history curriculum, and the removal of transdisciplinary links between history and citizenship (which also has taken a more "national turn" and only includes limited reference to human rights in the last two years of schooling, Key Stage 4). The low response rate in mentions of the Holocaust is perhaps more surprising, given that this event is the only statutory element of England's contemporary history curriculum. Discrepancies between responses from the students in England and students in other countries (for example, the very limited mention of the French revolution as linked to human rights), could be interpreted through England's rather insular identity (epitomized by Michael Gove's speech, 2010, above), and the perception of a separation between English history and continental European history. Finally, the relatively low amount of factual references can be traced back to the status of history, which becomes optional from Year 9 (14-15 years old). Students who completed the questionnaire might not have



studied history for three to four years. The English responses all point to the pitfalls of “re-nationalizing” the curriculum and the ways in which it might lead students to omit what the curriculum loftily refers to as the “wider world”.

While the Indian respondents do acknowledge the past events and declarations mentioned in the formal curricula, the strong focus on national and local events connected to human rights may be explained by the strong emphasis on Indian perspectives in the curriculum. The fact that human rights are underpinned by references to the constitution in the formal curricula can be seen in the many respondents linking human rights to *The right to freedom* and other passages in the constitution. Women’s rights are also mainly highlighted through the national context: the students’ responses challenge the assumption that women commit suicide through widow-burning out of free volition, thus highlighting religious and patriarchal traditions in India. While not representative, students’ responses in India show the importance of constant intervention from teachers to build on the content given in textbooks in order to place issues of human rights in a global context.

The New Zealand responses show there is still work to be done towards integrating the broader curriculum aims and philosophies into the programmes as delivered to and understood by students. While there is evidence of recognition of theories and issues of human rights in some contexts, this is clearly dependent upon the content and historical context being adequately framed and focused and is a likely explanation for the strong showing of Black Civil Rights in the US, the Invasion of Parihaka and Women’s Suffrage. The relative lack of identification of contexts with a significant human rights component such as the New Zealand Wars and their aftermath along with other indigenous historical contexts, points to a need to look carefully at ways to help more students develop the historical consciousness that supports critical awareness of human rights issues in national and global contexts. This may be, in part, solved by recasting focus questions and foregrounding the HRE aspects of the context. This is obviously an important consideration in the emerging local discussion around the strengths, limitations and future of the high autonomy curriculum model currently in place (Education Review Office, 2018; Ormond, 2017; Sheehan, 2017a; 2017b).

The South African formal curriculum has, as mentioned above, human rights as an underpinning principle. This ideological position has also filtered down to the content covered which, amongst others, focusses on the French Revolution as the event that birthed human rights, and the Holocaust, Social Darwinism, Civil Rights Movements, the Genocide in Rwanda and Apartheid as examples where human rights were flagrantly violated. South African learners in their responses generally steered clear of the aforementioned and focused almost exclusively on local events that related to human rights such as the struggle against apartheid, ideas of black consciousness, the messianic role of Mandela in the struggle for human rights and how this manifests itself in public holidays as an extension of the formal curriculum. In the process of backgrounding the global struggles for human rights in favour of the South African struggle in this regard, serves to reiterate the thinking of the South African struggle for human rights as being exceptional and worthy. This poses serious questions about the teaching and learning of human rights as a global phenomenon as articulated in the South African history curriculum.

In the Swedish case, some tendencies separating the responses of young Swedes may be understood in light of the formal curricula. Considering theories of human rights, it may be seen as problematic that Swedish students often fail to note violations of human rights in the past, and when they do so the adolescents note events that took place far away in regards to time and place. . The fact that the national minorities are not evident is a stark contrast to the formal curricula and an indication of that the Swedish students have not learned about human rights violations nor the history of minorities as a part of their own history. Thus, thinking local in

order to act global *for* an active engagement in human rights remains a challenge for stakeholders in Swedish education.

In line with international guidelines, the students in the global North and South shed light upon different social, political and cultural rights as protected and stressed by the conventions and declarations meant to be implemented through history education. In stark contrast to international guidelines, the defence of cultural diversity and particularly the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples, is a rights issue overlooked by most students in the survey.

What is more prominent in general is the leaning towards the national and the local, a tendency most visible among the US, the Indian and South African respondents. In India, human rights issues largely relate to the struggle for independence, civil rights for Dalits and equality within the country. When Indian students connect human rights to court decisions, conventions and systems upholding human rights, the national constitution stands out. In South Africa, recent struggles for human rights within their borders have resulted in many commemorations of national historical events connected to the crime of apartheid. These celebrations have become an integral part of South Africa's history culture and coincide with what young people associate with the history of human rights. In both the Indian and South African cases, the own past is considered important to the students; a fact partly explained by the status of the two prominent leaders and champions of human rights who, in both countries, stand out as messianic. In the South African case, the messianic role of Mandela in history culture might explain why the students steer clear of many of the statutory elements of human rights prescribed in the formal curricula. The same tendency is visible in England, where the single statutory element of human rights in history education is acknowledged by only a few respondents. In the English context, the current re-nationalizing of the curriculum and the limited acknowledgement of diversity in different areas of the curriculum (history, citizenship, literature) may also be an explanation for why colonialism and imperialism have no room in the re-narration of the island's past. Consequently, the English respondents in this survey did not view colonialism as a violation of human rights. Colonialism and the decolonization processes are, however, not top of mind among adolescents in countries that had been victims of internal and external colonialism, albeit they seem more prominent in these societies. This fact may perhaps indicate that this particular "folly of humankind" [Sic!] is not being taught in the light of human rights.

Other tendencies in the students' responses highlight in what ways students might have learnt *about* human rights. The US respondents stand out in the regard as they identify the most international violations of human rights: the genocides and mass violence in Rwanda and Armenia, and the treatment of the Rohingya in South East Asia. The Swedish students, on the other hand, would note the importance of legal documents more than the US and the other countries. The New Zealand students also stand out by linking human rights in history education to protests, social movements and their associated leaders. Especially prominent among the NZ students is the struggle for women's rights. This prominence is somewhat expected because the struggle features in courses in a variety of contexts across year levels. It was also – in 2018 – the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's suffrage in New Zealand and commemorative plans, exhibitions and publications are well publicized.

What unites the adolescents of the world and constitutes 'the global' in the global history of human rights as manifested in the responses is two-fold. Firstly, the students regard slavery as the worst possible violation of human rights. Secondly, the students, judging by their answers, consider the struggle for women's rights and equality as an important issue of human rights. These two historical events are what unites the youth and something that transcends the north-south divide.

The nature of the responses collected in all six countries, covering diverse themes of human rights, suggests that the respondents qualify to be global citizens as far as the understanding of history of human rights at international level is concerned. Yet, there is a certain leaning towards the domestic and, in some cases, students seem to have forgotten about both past and present injustices and violations of human rights. In order to safeguard human rights and foster global citizens, issues of Euro- and Americentrism, together with issues of gender and sexual equality, need to be addressed. The relationship between the global and the local also need to be understood at a deeper level. Promoting human rights is however not just about implementing normative decrees of global human rights, peace and sustainability in the classroom. In order to be fully on par with the proposals of the ideological curricula that is the modern human rights regime of the UN and UNESCO, and in a broader sense become global citizens, students also need to face their own emotionally and politically charged past and complex present.

The fact that South African, Indian and American learners, to a larger degree, noted human rights documents, movements and violations as domestic, may be interpreted as good preparation to identify and act in the local community. The South African adolescents noting *women's march against passes* and thus highlighting women's rights in the local context is a great example of local events that may further human rights actions. However, the leaning towards the local may in other cases may also be viewed as a problematic lack of interest in human rights in the rest of the world, where the nation and the domestic are viewed as more important than promoting international understanding and universal human rights. Learning *about* human rights violations as a part of one's own history may be fruitful *for* an active engagement in human rights. In this regard, Sweden, England and New Zealand, in turn, may have to revision, recast and foreground human rights aspects of the different historical contexts brought up in history education. All three countries share the common denominator of some level of teacher autonomy in regards to the question of *what* content to foreground. Thus, dimensions of teacher autonomy in relation to topics of human rights in history education need to be better investigated in future research.

Furthermore, the responses shed light upon the fact that formal curricula in many cases do not seep down into the minds of students. In some instances, notions of nationalism and exceptionalism in society and history culture pose great challenges to the teaching and learning of human rights in history. In other instances, a stronger focus on global history have led to difficulties in identifying issues of human rights in the local context. Ultimately, it is up to each history teacher to make students aware of the history culture that surrounds the students in their everyday lives; to challenge grand narratives about one's own nation's past and by doing so giving a voice to the unheard and the minorities in the past and the present. Lastly, stakeholders in education in the Global North and South may ask themselves how to best teach *about*, *through* and *for* human rights and how to use history education as means to *change*: is it time to think local in order to act global, or vice versa, to think global in order to act local?

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> A *Global history* is a term that takes the connectedness of the world as its point of departure. (Conrad, 2016, p. 1-17). *A global history* includes narratives and histories of the marginalized, the minorities and other groups who have been disadvantaged in the past. While the term *World history* also includes the whole world, it may be regarded as a term from a colonial past and thus excluding afore-mentioned narratives. By employing the term *global history*, we acknowledge post-colonial structures and emphasize multiperspectivity in history education.

<sup>2</sup> The survey was developed as part of the project, “The Complexity of Implementing Ideals of Global Citizenship: A comparative Study of Human Rights, Peace and Sustainability in Education” and the research node “Global Citizenship Education in Historical and Critical Perspectives (GLOC)” directed by Thomas Nygren, Uppsala University.

<sup>3</sup> This research has been carried out according to the standards for ethical clearance that apply in all the different states that are surveyed in order to protect the participants of this study. For further school specific related data such as grade-level distribution and pupil exposure to Human rights education, see appendix.

<sup>4</sup> For an analysis, see Bentreovato & Wassermann (2018) and Tibbits & Weldon (2017).

<sup>5</sup> However, strong critique has been levelled at the CAPS curriculum namely that it embraces an “unacceptable presentism”, that the linkages in historical comparisons are problematic as linkages between sections are not overt, that a clear lack of chronology fosters “thinking in bubbles” and finally, the good intentions are undermined by practical problems such as a lack of easily accessible published resources and teacher expertise available in most schools (Kallaway, 2012).



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<sup>6</sup> The sole exception being a NZ student paying attention to the genocide on the Rohingya and the Palestine and one English student noting “genocide” in general.

<sup>7</sup> Mandela and the anti-apartheid movement is mentioned by 22 South African students, 14 English students, 6 US and NZ students respectively, 5 Swedish students and 2 Indian students.

<sup>8</sup> There is an argument around “South African exceptionalism” which suggests that only their suffering and achievements (for example issues related to apartheid) are worthy. Whether South African exceptionalism is the reason for the holocaust struggling to find a footing in the consciousness of learners in South Africa or not is however questionable.

<sup>9</sup> World War II is however present in the South African answers only as it relates to the holocaust.

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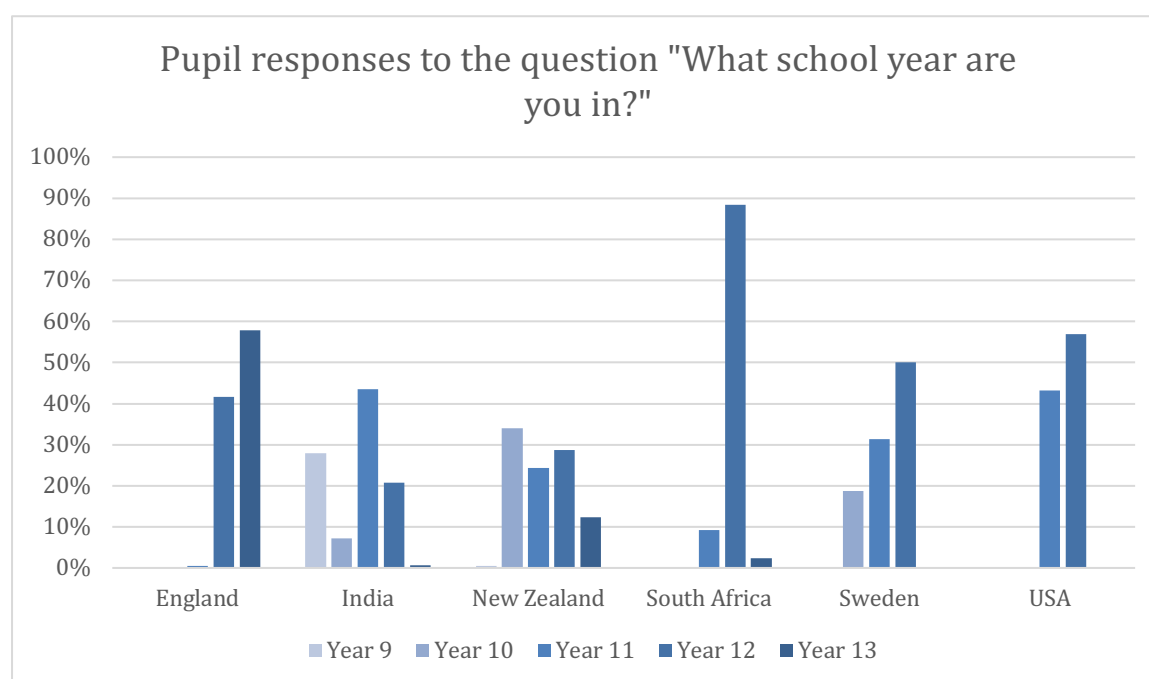
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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1: Pupil responses to the question "what school year are you in?"*



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**Appendix 2: Exposure to Human rights education in and outside of school**